

TRACTS FOR TO-DAY

Is Jesus Coming Soon?

A Bible Study of Adventism
Russellism, Etc.

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IS JESUS COMING SOON?

ON this the liveliest religious question of the present day there are two well-defined views.

1. There is the view of the premillennialist, who is just now preaching with much assurance that Jesus is soon coming to earth to begin a literal, personal, visible reign of a thousand years. This is the millennium. They declare that the coming is "imminent." Added to this belief of the coming there is usually a definite program concerning this earthly millennium, as well as a definite and elaborate program for all the "last things." They are sometimes called Adventists, because of their belief in a literal advent.

2. The other view is that of the postmillennialists, who believe that through the preaching of the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit Christ will come to the earth spiritually and reign in human hearts. They believe that the gospel and the Holy Spirit will finally overcome the world of evil and that in God's own time, which has never been revealed to man, Christ will come to the world in judgment. Their idea of Christ's coming to the earth to reign is that he comes spiritually.

Neither of these views is confined to any one Church. Regarding the premillennial view, there have been in the past many Churches that have made a specialty of adventism: The Advent Christian, the Seventh-Day Adventist, the Mormons, and the Millennial Dawn, or Russellites, as well as va-

rious lesser lights. Except to agree on a literal advent and an earthly millennial reign, these sects do not agree with each other. They differ widely as to the control of the millennium, which each claims; and they differ as to the character of the reign, some merely making it a probationary state.

To these believers may be linked various members of different evangelical Churches, who, while not agreeing to the different dates others have set for the coming nor the millennial details, have, nevertheless, set their own dates and have arranged their own details. But notwithstanding their wide difference on certain details, they have all agreed on a speedy second coming. And to-day, more than at any time since the Millerite "coming" of 1843-44, the speedy second coming of Jesus is preached. Many good men and good women are convinced so absolutely on this point that the question calls for an immediate and close study.

One of the surprising things in the preaching of the second advent, which they all unite on declaring to be "imminent," is the teaching of a millennial system, arranged with minute detail, and an elaborate program arranged for the final consummation of all things in the heavens also. It might seem that a man could even believe in a literal coming and a millennial kingdom and yet leave the details of that kingdom and the details of the final consummation of all things in the hands of the Lord. The synoptists and St. Paul, who are often quoted by the Adventists, have no such program; but this reticence has not been learned by the present-day champions. No outstanding leader of the move-

ment has succeeded thus far in accomplishing this devoutly-to-be-wished-for consummation.

Usually with the acceptation of the premillennial, or Adventist, views there is the acceptation also of an intricate and involved eschatological scheme or program of the last things; and while these schemes are not always in perfect accord with each other, they are quite as interesting for the points on which they differ as for the points of agreement. So in dealing with the question of the speedy second coming in the very nature of the case we are compelled to deal with all the other features which have almost invariably been bound up in that system by its different teachers. Let us ask first, On what do all these teachers claim to base their millennial schemes? They all claim to base their argument on two foundations: First, the Bible; second, the teaching of certain Christians throughout the ages.

First, then, as to the Bible. We shall see that the Old Testament is quoted even more largely than the New.

Of course the Synoptic Gospels, which seem in extended references to predict an overthrow of things temporal and also to predict the end of the world, play a large part. Dealing with the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, the thirteenth chapter of Mark, and the twenty-first chapter of Luke, the millennialists make the words of Jesus to refer to the destruction of this present world and to foretell his own second coming. Let us look into it. In all of these the prophecy of Jesus concerning the destruction of the temple leads to the question from the disciples as to the time when these things shall be

accomplished. Jesus then, according to the teaching of the synoptists, describes a time of terrible tribulation—nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom, all involved in a horrible war. Then come famine and earthquakes. But as horrible as these things are, they are but the beginning of trouble. A terrible persecution of the people of God begins, and not only are the people of God persecuted by the enemy, but they hate and betray each other, delivering each other up to be killed. False prophets arise and lead many astray. Even the very best lose their warm love because iniquity abounds. In Matthew it is given as a sign that the gospel shall be preached to the whole inhabited earth, and then the end will come. The appearance of the “abomination of desolation” in the “holy place” or “where it ought not to be” is given by both Matthew and Mark as a sign of the end. Matthew refers this specifically to the book of Daniel. (See Daniel xix. 27; xi. 31; xii. 11.) Again, there is in both the warning of the “false prophet”: “If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or, Here, believe it not.” Immediately after the tribulation on earth there shall be a sign of tribulation in heaven. The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall. Then shall the sign of the Son of Man appear in the heavens, and then shall he be seen coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Luke expressly states: “This generation shall not pass away till all things be accomplished.”

The fourth Gospel differs both in tone and expression from the synoptists regarding the “second com-

ing." In John it is not an earthly, material coming; it is spiritual. The Jewish conception, we must confess, is largely evident in the synoptics. The Jewish idea of the Messiah was that after he had left the world he would return in power to destroy the hostile forces of the world. John was one who heard the words which the synoptists reproduced, but in the mind of John the Jewish and material conception of the coming was so completely lost that the words gave to him a great spiritual teaching which he elucidates otherwise. In the fourteenth chapter of John, where occurs that celebrated farewell discourse, we have a picture of the coming again of the heavenly Trinity. In verse 16 Christ speaks of the "coming" of the Holy Spirit, in verse 18 he speaks of his own "coming," and in verse 23 he speaks of the "coming" of both his Father and himself. In John v. 22 Christ speaks of judgment being given into his hands; in vi. 40 he declares he will raise up on the last day all who believe in him and give them eternal life; while in chapter v. 28, 29 Christ speaks of a resurrection of the good and the bad on the last day, who are raised by his voice.

Thus you can see the spiritual nature of the whole conception. In two instances Matthew has the same spiritual tone. In Matthew xviii. 20 we read, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," and in xxviii. 20: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

There is no doubt that St. Paul's earlier views, expressed most fully in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, were decidedly Jewish and predicted a Jewish and literal

coming, but for which he set no definite date, although he would not have been surprised at this coming at any time. The epistles to the Thessalonians were his earliest epistles, and we shall see later that St. Paul did not much exalt this literal view in writings of later date.

Let us note Paul's idea of the "coming," or the parousia, of 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-17 there is a visible descent of the Lord to earth and a visible resurrection of the earthly dead. In the fifth chapter the "day of the Lord," or the "second coming," is discussed. It will be entirely unexpected, like a thief in the night. The punishment of the wicked shall come with equal suddenness. In 2 Thessalonians, second chapter, these words occur: "Now we beseech you, brethren, in behalf of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together with him." In this chapter also it is asserted that there will be a falling away before the "coming," and the "lawless one" will be destroyed, even by the Lord Jesus, being brought to naught by the manifestation of his presence" (parousia).

Here in both letters to the Thessalonians we see that Paul believed in a literal, earthly coming and that he had a program for the resurrection period which even the synoptists did not dream of. However, his program in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18 concerns only the resurrection of the dead and the ascension of the living, a program exceedingly meager when compared with the programs of those who are vociferously proclaiming the immediate second coming to-day. In 1 Corinthians vii. 25-31 the passing

away of the present order, which Paul believes is already being accomplished, makes it unwise for a man to marry. In 1 Corinthians xv. 51, 52 we have the phrase: "We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed." This is thought to indicate that some Christians would be living when the Lord should come. 1 Peter iv. 7, "The time is at hand" (literally, "has come"), and Hebrews x. 37, "A little while he that cometh shall come," evidently refer to the coming of Jesus again to earth, and that right early. There is no doubt but that there are some verses in the New Testament which seemed to teach a literal, earthly and early coming of Jesus. Old Testament verses, which outnumber the New by about seven to one, as evidenced by an actual count of the verses in some of the books of the "adventists," but which are not convincing, are put aside from our consideration for the present.

Of course the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation are both quoted wholesale, Daniel leading by an overwhelming majority. To cite the quotations from Daniel would involve whole chapters, while in the book of Revelation the twentieth chapter is accounted a veritable storehouse of treasure for the millennialist, and really the whole New Testament fabric of the millennium is obtained here, for neither the Gospels nor the epistles speak anywhere of a thousand years' reign of Christ on earth. Without this one chapter the whole teaching of the millennium would have to fall back completely on the Jewish notion. But before beginning our work of examining in some detail the teaching of the synoptists—John and Paul, as well as the book of Rev-

elation—we must present the second phase of the argument of the millennialists, the teaching on this subject throughout the Christian centuries.

It is stated that Church historians declare in no uncertain tones that the early Christians, even those immediately succeeding the apostles, looked in a very confident way for a speedy earthly coming of our Lord. Dr. I. M. Haldeman, in "The History of the Doctrine of the Lord's Return," starts in with Barnabas, who was a companion of Paul, and quotes from him; also from Hermas, supposed to be the Hermas of the sixteenth chapter of Romans, who is also supposed to have written the "Shepherd." Hermas is quoted as saying that the present age was like winter to the Christian, but that the coming age would be "like the summer." The inference here is, I suppose, that the "speedy coming" would be as the summer, although he does not say so. Clement, A.D. 96, Polycarp, A.D. 108, Papias, A.D. 116, and Ignatius, all are quoted to show their strong belief in a speedy second coming. Justin Martyr, A.D. 150, Irenæus, then Tertullian, who lived about A.D. 200, Nepos, A.D. 262, Lactantius, A.D. 300, and Eusebius are quoted most approvingly.

It is contended that this doctrine was given its death blow in the third century by Origen and that it languished from then to the Reformation. At the time of the Reformation, Luther is quoted as saying: "Let us not think that the coming of Christ is afar off." Melanchthon: "This aged world is not far from the end." Later John Knox: "The Lord shall return, and that with expedition." Coming down through the centuries, he quotes Latimer,

Rutherford, John Milton, Isaac Watts, Cowper, Montgomery, Heber, Increase and Cotton Mather, Fletcher of Madeley, and others. Every age, he claims, looked for the speedy and immediate coming of Jesus. This is a plain, fair, full statement of the case, and we must now go back to examine both in detail.

Let us first examine carefully the argument from the Scriptures. Taking the argument from the quotation of the synoptists, we picture Peter, James, John, and Andrew asking Christ two questions after his discourse on the destruction of the temple. First, "When shall these things be?" And, second, "What shall be the sign of thy coming and the consummation of the age?"

If we could adopt the explanation of Godet, that we have in these chapters the combined reports of addresses delivered at different times, we might have an explanation, but an incomplete one. Certainly one of the big difficulties would be removed, for here the two questions are answered as one. The issue must now be met squarely. Christ either refers these discourses in the synoptists to the fall of Jerusalem, which came to pass less than forty years later when in A.D. 70 the Roman conqueror Titus took the city, or he referred to the "end of the world," which the millennialists believe at the present time is "imminent."

In this connection we believe that the burden of proof would be on those who argue that it did not refer to the fall of Jerusalem and conditions that followed later. Let us look closely at the whole incident. Jesus and his disciples were in the tem-

ple; and the disciples, with the pardonable earthly pride of Jews in their temple, came to him to point out the buildings of the temple to him. Jesus uses the occasion to say that all the magnificence they are exulting in will be destroyed, so utterly destroyed that not one stone will be left upon another. They then pass over to the Mount of Olives, and immediately the disciples unburden their minds. If the temple is going to be destroyed, they expected, as Jews naturally would, that the end of the world was near. And now they desire to know when these things shall be. Jesus then proceeded to tell them, and he cited instances, for which we have the word of history, that actually preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. What were the things he had spoken of? First, false teachers were to come in his name. Josephus says that during the procuratorship of Felix there were numbers who deceived and deluded the people under the pretense of divine inspiration. We are told by the historians that especially before the siege of Titus pretended messiahs were exceedingly numerous about Jerusalem. And then, further, it was not only a time of war, but of rumors of war. Weekly the Jews, in whom the wish was father to the thought, had all the nations in the country at war with the Romans and other especial enemies of the Jews at war with each other. The famine in the days of Claudius, mentioned in Acts xi. 28, is mentioned by Josephus, who said that it lasted for several years and that it raged not only in Judea, but in the neighboring countries as well. It is recorded that in the reign of Nero many cities in Asia Minor were destroyed by earthquake. Con-

cerning the delivering up of the disciples to death, this is too well known to comment on. Peter, Paul, James, and James the Less were all put to death before the destruction of Jerusalem.

A study of the book of Acts will not only show the persecution of the saints, but will show the fight of the false brethren, even against the disciples, and will show evidences of the apostasy of some. Secular historians have noted frequently that there was a literal fulfillment of the Lord's words: "Many shall be offended and betray one another." The preaching of the gospel for a witness in all the then known world was an accomplished fact before the fall of Jerusalem. And the "abomination of desolation" was set up in the precincts of the temple before the destruction of Jerusalem. What was the "abomination of desolation"? We take it that it was nothing less than the Roman eagles of the standards and the image of the emperor of Rome, who was accorded divine honors by the Romans. Their placing them on the temple walls and in the holy places "where they ought not to be," and even in "the Most Holy Place," was the abomination which made desolate. The pious Jew would flee from such things as a pestilence.

It is said that many of the Jewish Christians, being warned by the words of Christ, fled the city and went to Pella, a town forming the northern boundary of Perea, at the first news of the Roman approach. It is a curious historical fact that when the Roman army under Cestius Gallus first marched against the city instead of taking it immediately they retired. This gave the Christians who had

taken Christ's word to heart time to flee, and they escaped. And the historical accounts show that they fled in as great haste as the warning said they should. It was left to Titus to fulfill Matthew xxiv. 21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor shall ever be."

The siege of Titus was the most horrible in the history of all time. The Romans began to besiege the town in 70 A.D. The siege lasted six months, and a book could be written on all the stories of horrible suffering. On the tenth of August, 70 A.D., exactly six centuries after Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the temple of Solomon, this temple of Herod was destroyed. And, as Christ had predicted, it was destroyed so utterly that not one stone was left upon another. One million one hundred thousand persons perished in the siege, and nearly one hundred thousand were carried away into captivity. All the houses and all the underground chambers of the temple were filled with putrefying corpses. Every home, it is said by historians, contained whole houses of dead men. We venture the assertion that in all time, not even excepting the horrible war which is now raging, there has been no slaughter and suffering comparable to this.

In six months, in a limited area, with only two armies fighting, the loss in dead alone among the Jews was over a million. The Roman loss must have been also very great. After the ravaging of the dead bodies by the birds of prey and immediately after the tribulation of that day, there would be signs in the heavens—the darkening of the sun, the

falling of the stars—things which have always been associated with calamities. Then it was that the sign of the Son of Man should appear in the heavens, the tribes of the earth were to mourn, and then the Son of Man was to come in the clouds with power and great glory, the trumpet would sound, and the elect would be gathered from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another.

The word “immediately” in Matthew xxiv. 29, which may be associated with the expression of Mark, “in those days,” can naturally mean but one thing: immediately after the fall of Jerusalem. To give it prophetic latitude and say that immediately may mean thousands of years is simply to beg the question. Especially is this apparent when we consider the thirty-fourth verse of this same chapter: “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” In Luke xxi. 31 and also in Mark xiii. 30 the same thought identically is expressed. This generation—not the Jewish nation, nor the Christian Church, nor generations to whom the gospel was to be preached, nor the generation of “the times of the Gentiles,” as many fancifully believe, but this generation, the race of men living when Jesus spoke.

If there are any who seek to make the second coming in 1918 A.D., as many are asserting to-day, the great teaching of the synoptists, let them reckon with this fact: “Where is their temple which Christ said would be utterly destroyed?” Surely they would not deny a fact of history so obvious, that the temple he referred to was destroyed in 70 A.D. When Jesus said that “this generation shall not

pass away till all these things be accomplished." the pronoun "these" must undoubtedly refer back to Matthew xxiv. 29-31. We cannot make the prophecy refer to the immediate present in one breath and then make it have a far-off indefinite future in another. The temple Christ spoke of was destroyed. It cannot be destroyed again.

We believe that Christ came again after the destruction of Jerusalem; but we believe that he came, as he said he would in John xiv. 18, in spiritual power. Remember that John heard this discourse; and this, the spiritual view which Christ proclaimed in his farewell discourse, was the view John had of his coming.

We believe that the "consummation of the age" did not mean here the end of the world. We have good authority for this statement. The Adventists so construe it in other places. We believe here that the coming of Christ was a most distinctive epoch in the life of the Christian Church. When you understand Judaism and the hold that it had on men through its ceremonies, you will then understand that the destruction of the temple was necessary for the "gathering out of the elect." We believe that all who "had eyes to see" the "coming of the Son of man" and his gospel in greater power immediately succeeding that event saw it. It was the death of Judaism, but the real "coming" of Christian freedom from ceremonies; for as long as the temple existed Christianity would never have been to many Jews anything but an appendage to Judaism.

Further, Christ himself used the destruction of the temple to enforce a great spiritual truth when

he declared that when the temple was destroyed it would be utterly destroyed; but if his body was destroyed, it would be raised again on the third day. May he not here also have meant the destruction of the temple to teach a great spiritual truth? Who will deny that in these discourses there is both the prophetic and the apocalyptic element, the prophecy relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, which was literally fulfilled, even to the letter, and the apocalyptic element, which related to the events succeeding that destruction which are manifestly apocalyptic? Even as all good students believe there is a mingling of the apocalyptic and the practical in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, the apocalyptic elements being contained in the chapters and verses we have quoted from these epistles in this article and which we shall consider now in greater detail.

Let us consider first the verses in 1 Thessalonians iv. 13-18. These verses were evidently written to comfort the hearts of those people who had lost loved ones and who believed that their dear ones who had died before the earthly coming of Jesus, which they regarded as "imminent," could not be raised from the dead. Paul writes that those who have fallen asleep in Jesus or "through Jesus" will God bring with him. Paul evidently believed that their souls were in the keeping of the Father, even though their earthly bodies were asleep in the dust. He then declared that these dead shall rise first; even those who are alive at the "coming," or the "parousia," will not go before them. The dead shall rise first. Those that are left shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, "and so shall

be ever with the Lord." We will say here with all frankness that these verses seem to teach an immediate earthly coming of Jesus. The nut we wish the millennialists to crack for us, since they use these verses to prove their thousand years of earthly reign, is whether the parousia was a mere point in time or an elongated extension of time. If it is a thousand years here, how do they know it? Paul nowhere says so. Not the slightest intimation is given here as to the length of the parousia or presence of Jesus. There is a world of scholarship holding the view that the parousia is but a mere short point in time. Perhaps the Adventists, who know all things intuitively and who soak up knowledge as a sponge soaks up water, will be able to enlighten us on that subject. In the meanwhile we would remind them that nuts are hard on milk teeth.

We said that these verses "seem to teach an immediate earthly coming of Jesus." If it were not for the verses in the fifth chapter immediately succeeding and which undoubtedly form a connected whole and for a larger part of the second chapter of 2 Thessalonians, we should say that Paul did believe without qualification in the immediate second coming of Jesus. But when we take the teaching of the fifth chapter, we find in substance this: Of the time of the preceding chapters it is not necessary for me to write you. You yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night or just as suddenly as birth pains come upon a woman. So shall destruction come upon the wicked. Do not dwell in the darkness on this subject. Watch and be sober. And then, whether we awake or sleep,

we shall live together with him. Two things are taught here. It is just as impossible for me to fix the time of the Lord's coming as it is for a man to know exactly at what hour the thief will come in the night. Watch and be sober.

Further, in 2 Thessalonians ii. 1-12, he writes again "touching the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken in your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is just at hand." What is the evident teaching here? Undoubtedly some one was declaring by word and by epistle that Paul was teaching that the "day of the Lord" was "just at hand." Paul declares this a forgery and warns them not to be troubled by any such messages. He did not write or send them.

On the other hand, he teaches that before the coming of the Lord there must first be a falling away and the revealing of the "man of sin," who will be slain in the coming of the Lord Jesus. The "lawless one" is working now, but at present there is one that restraineth. It may be soon; it may be long. One thing is certain, Paul does not attempt to set any definite date. It must be noticed in all these apocalyptic references that the great spiritual lesson was the duty of watchfulness and sobriety. They were to live as ever in the presence of the Lord, but they were not to neglect a single earthly duty. I believe I can say in all good conscience that this is a fair, plain, sane, and natural explanation of Paul's teaching of the "coming of the Lord" as shown in the

Thessalonian epistles. If I have erred in a single point, I am humbly open to correction.

We must now look briefly to the references of Paul in 1 Corinthians vii. 25-31. It must be conceded here also that St. Paul believed that "the time was short." But whatever the belief, it is worth a great deal to notice that at no time in his life did he ever attempt to set a date or arrange a schedule such as is worked out by all the millennialists of to-day. We must also note that the epistles to the Thessalonians and the first letter to the Corinthians were among his very earliest epistles, and in the later epistles this view of an earthly parousia is not exalted. As far as Paul was personally concerned when he was actually in the face of certain death, he adopted a different view. See the second epistle to Timothy iv. 8. If the "time-table prophets" can get any comfort for their set programs out of St. Paul's views, they are welcome to it. We see no reason why they could not also furnish the entire country with light and power extracted from the cucumber crop. However, the millennialists are nothing if not resourceful, and they can discard all the New Testament if you will only let them keep a few verses in the book of Revelation, the book of Daniel, and the old Jewish notion of the millennium, born two centuries before Christ.

So to the book of Revelation they go with acclaim, and then they set up what miners would call a "permanent camp" in chapter xx. In all the Bible, except in this chapter, there is no other mention of a thousand years' reign of Christ on earth. "Here we rest" becomes their motto. And what a program

they make for the millennium! The Rev. Irl Hicks never, even in his palmiest days, worked out a yearly program for the weather such as they have worked out of their fertile imaginations for the Lord to follow.

Here is a sample taken from one of their books which is being circulated by the thousands all over the country. It is from "Jesus Is Coming," by W. E. B., a man who is evidently very sincere, but sincerely mistaken. See what a program he has just for the millennial kingdom:

The kingdom having been set up and all that offend gathered out of the land, the Lord Jesus judges first his own people, the Jews, as to their fidelity to him and then the nations on earth as to their treatment of his people in trouble. The ten tribes of Israel, after purification, are brought into the land and, together with the two tribes of Judah, become one nation. The Lord makes the new covenant with his people, Israel and Judah, forgiving their iniquity and remembering their sins no more; while punishments are visited on Gog and his armies, who are overthrown and destroyed. The Jewish people come into possession of the full extent of their land, according to promise, including the Great Desert, which "blossoms as the rose." The temple and the city are rebuilt after the divine plan and the Levitical sacrifices and form of worship, with some modifications, reestablished. Nothing shall hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain. The Lord sets his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, both Israel and Judah, from the four corners of the earth. All nations go to worship the King and keep the feast of tabernacles.

Now, this remarkable schedule is buttressed by about one hundred quotations of Scripture. But where do you suppose W. E. B. got them? About ninety of these quotations are from the Old Testament and the rest from the New. A new version of

the "ninety and nine." Isaiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel are the leaders; but Genesis, Joel, Amos, and even Numbers are not forgotten. It somehow strikes you that he first made his plan and then sought out the Scriptures to buttress it. His argument comes first; his reasons may follow, if they can. But the preponderance of Old Testament quotations can be accounted for if you will examine the "time-table" he furnishes the Lord to go by. Jewish? It is Jewish to the core. From Isaiah xiii. 9 and xxxiii. 14, supplemented by Matthew xiii. 30-41, he deduces that the Lord judges "his own people," who, by the bye, have consistently rejected him for two thousand years. His own people? In Matthew xiii. he very aptly tears up the parable of the tares by the roots, beginning at the end. He then quotes the parable of the grain of mustard seed and the parable of the hidden leaven; and in the Master's explanation of the parables he commits another piece of artful surgery and cuts off the explanation at the end of the forty-first verse, which ends with a comma, and seems to neglect purposely quoting the forty-second verse, which is the grammatical conclusion of the forty-first. The reason for this is that the forty-second verse speaks of the "furnace of fire," and his little home-made "time-table" would go up in smoke if that verse were allowed to stand. Because it does not prove his theory, but rather kills it, he omits purposely the first part of the parable of the tares; for the first part of this parable, which he so arbitrarily dissects, teaches that the "kingdom" is on earth, here and now, and that the seeds grow until the next world, the harvest. He claims that the king-

dom is not set up until the harvest. That is where he differed from the Master.

This is just a sample. The rest of the millennium is made up in just the same manner. He has the Lord extending forgiveness to people who do not seem the least bit inclined to ask for it; and he spends the rest of the time making the kingdom a Jewish state, over which the long-lost, though much-discussed, ten tribes of Israel, who were lost world without end by assimilation with the heathen, and the two tribes of Judah, will rule. Evidently the Gentiles are destined to have no part or lot in W. E. B.'s "kingdom."

He quotes Ezekiel, Deuteronomy, Genesis, Joshua, and Isaiah to prove that the Jews will go back to their land, Palestine, and the Great Desert will "blossom as the rose," a piece of prophecy which Isaiah made of a time this side of the millennium. We see that W. E. B. puts the earthly seat of the millennium in and around Jerusalem, although there is no positive New Testament warrant for doing this. The Jewish character of the scheme is again apparent. The temple and the city, Jerusalem, are again built up, and the "Levitical sacrifices, with some modifications," are established. Why the modifications? Where does he get this? From the Old Testament, of course, and he uses to prove his contention some prophecies which relate wholly to the establishment of the Jews in their land before Christ came to earth. Also the keeping of "the feast of tabernacles" can be sustained only by doing an immense amount of carpenter's work on the quotations. These are merely samples. Through kind-

ness of heart I spare you details and "schedules" of the "Rapture" and the "Revelation," which the ingenious author makes for us with scissors, a pot of paste, and an Old Testament, which he cuts to pieces until it resembles a Chinese puzzle. W. E. B.'s program of the "last things" after the millenium is equally as intricate and Jewish as his imagination can make it. In the preface to his book W. E. B. says that the "second coming" is "uncertain and imminent." How can a thing which is imminent be so uncertain? This is worthy of the attention of the Delphic oracle. But perhaps he means that in his attention to the preparation of his minute "time-table," which he evidently expects the Lord to use implicitly, he has hitherto neglected to set the exact minute.

Now, concerning the twentieth chapter of Revelation. Since beginning this study I have read ten expositions on this much-debated chapter. Three of these "expositions" were by people who claimed, without a moment's hesitation or the shadow of a smile, that they were especially inspired to understand this chapter. The other seven all had keys, all of different makes; and each key was the only one, positively and absolutely, which would open the mystery. After examining all these different keys, all I will say is, "I would like to see the lock." If I were not afraid of being misunderstood by that company whose name is legion and who have always a surplus of a lack of humor stored up, I would say, making a gentle paraphrase: "When an extreme literalist pretends to write on the book of Revelation, he is already off in his judgment, or he

will be before he gets through." No other criticism can do the subject justice. This book has been most deceitfully mangled to suit the whim of every literalist who felt that it was a fair field because no one could infallibly refute what he said. By the literalists the book of Revelation has been made a mystery, and that purposely. This purpose is to use it as arbitrarily as they please and to wrest out of all proportion its symbols and figures to sustain their own peculiar views.

Let us understand right now that the book of Revelation, like the book of Daniel, was apocalyptic. The book of Revelation was written in the apocalyptic style because that would be the safest style to write it under. It is intensely Jewish in its imagery and thus would be readily understood by those of the Christians who had formerly been Jews. On the other hand, it is intensely anti-Roman, as far as the persecuting emperor and his government were concerned, and would not be understood by them, even if they were to read it; and this would also be an extremely fortunate thing for any Christians found by the Roman authorities with quotations from the book on them. The book carried a message for its own times and for the Christian religion. Even as the book of Daniel under apocalyptic guise carried the message of the Jews of the time of Antiochus, "Hold on; stand fast; victory will come," even so the book of Revelation carried the message: "Hold on; stand fast; victory will come." Under one figure or another, over and over again, even as in the book of Daniel, the same message is preached.

Now, I submit that this view of the central teach-

ing of both books gives them a standing which commends itself immediately to every man's intelligence. This gives the books a real message, a message with a purpose, and rescues them from the chamber of horrors and unnatural history where the literalists have chained them. With this understanding we can easily see how the book of Revelation not only meant something to the early Christians, but can mean something equally clear and precious to us. But, on the other hand, to do as the literalists do when they take the book and have one and the same character refer variously to Napoleon Bonaparte, Frederick the Great, Nero, Attila the Hun, Emperor Wilhelm the modern Hun, Ghenghis Khan, and Aaron Burr and the same symbol refer to the United States, England, France, Germany, Herzegovina, or the Austrian Tyrol is too much.

The "mark of the beast" in Revelation has been made by the "inspired expositors" to mean variously the Roman Church, the Federal Council of Churches, keeping Sunday, the Salvation Army, and one even makes it to mean the wearing of jewelry. I believe that if we could apply the twentieth chapter as the revelator meant it should be applied we should get the same message that the people he wrote it for got, "the final triumph of good over evil; the victory of Christ over Satan." Divested of all its mysteriousness, this is the message John wished to give the persecuted saints of all time, and that is message enough for anybody. Having this only sane and logical view of the book, I do not believe that any millennial scheme based on a chapter of this book and nowhere else mentioned in the New

Testament has the value the literalists think it has, a chapter which is confessedly by all scholarship symbolic and in a book which is highly symbolic. And when the millennialists add to this and go to the extreme of not only using all the figurative language literally, but go the limit and build to their fancy structure with unrelated Old Testament references until the whole thing is top-heavy, then I think we had better pause and apply a little ordinary common sense in our "expositions" and have a return to reason. I am quite sure that I have only ordinary ability and imagination, but I venture to assert that I could, with no other material than the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation and by using the method of these extreme literalists, build up almost any kind of a future state that any one could wish. The literalists have revised the quotation of Fletcher and now say: "Let me but use my own method of 'exposition,' and I care not what the book really teaches."

Now, what shall we say regarding the statement of the learned Dr. Haldeman and others that the early Christian Church believed and preached the speedy second coming and believed in the millennium? There is but one thing to say in regard to his belief in the millennium. He does not go back far enough. It was believed in by Judaism two centuries before the Christian Church was born. I wonder at the reticence of some of them on this point, and I feel that they were afraid to push the date back much farther, for fear of proving too much. As good a Methodist authority as Dr. Richard Watson, indorsed by Dr. T. O. Summers, says

that the doctrine began with Elias, a rabbinical writer of the second century before Christ. Elias based it on the tradition which fixes the duration of the world in its imperfect state at six thousand years, with the approach of a sabbath of one thousand years wherein universal peace and plenty would be ushered in by the Messiah. There were only a few passages of Scripture which even the Jews in the second century believed taught the millennium, only a very few, the most prominent being Zechariah xiv. 16. The hundreds of Old Testament quotations used to-day by the millennialists were never used by the Jews. The doctrine was born out of the worldly sufferings of the Jews. The second century was a time of great distress and suffering to them. They were then pressed on every side by enemies, and they naturally began to think of a triumph in the golden future over every enemy, a triumph so complete that they would be the rulers and the despised Gentile the servant. Instead of the oppressor trying to take their religion away from them, as Antiochus was trying, they would see the day when the Gentile would be compelled to observe the Levitical laws and ceremonials. W. E. B.'s description of an exclusive Jewish millennium when the chosen people, the Lord's "own," would be the rulers and the nations (Gentiles) would be compelled to answer for their treatment of the Lord's own, the Jews, would just have suited a second-century Jew. Do you see the intensely Jewish conception of his millennial theory? And do you not see the compelling reason?

What shall we say to Dr. Haldeman's quotations concerning the "immediate coming" which he showed that Barnabas, Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Nepos, Eusebius, Melanchthon, Luther, Knox, Cotton Mather, and others extending from the first century even down to our own times believed in? What can we say except the very obvious thing which is written large in history, "They were mistaken"? When the above-named speak on a point of polity or usage in the early Church or a doctrine of the early Church, I am all attention and reverence, for I honor these great men of God for their work's sake. But when they make a prophecy and say that a certain thing is going to happen and history shows that it did not happen, then the only thing I can say about the expectation and the prophecy of Eusebius, Justin, John Knox, Cotton Mather, *et al.*, is to say that they were in error. Haldeman's "proofs" prove too much. There is not possibly a worse argument a premillennialist could use than to show that the ante-Nicene fathers, the post-Nicene fathers, the reformers, or the last-century Christians made a prophecy regarding the second coming when every one knows that it was a prophecy that flashed in the pan.

Again, the "learned Thebans" stop short. They leave out a large slice of proof that would prove that when the year 1000 A.D. approached practically the entire Christian world believed, as W. E. B. and his "train dispatcher prophets" believe now, that the second coming was "imminent." So imminent was it thought then that vast numbers of Christians, landed proprietors, made their wills and began them

with the significant words: "Appropinquante mundi termino" ("As the end of the world is approaching"). These "wills" gave everything to the Church. Well, the year one thousand came and went; and when the millennium did not arrive on the schedule, the humanness of human nature revealed itself. The landed proprietors wanted their lands back, possibly claiming that the consideration had failed; but the monks, who probably believed in the millennium with only half a mind (else why should they accept the property?), declined to give the land back. It is such delightful traces of unexpected and serious humor—the best kind, like Scotch humor—that make us love the "blessed simplicity" of men.

Another significant "proof" which the millennialists have fought shy of, like a German and a "verboten" sign, is the "fifth-monarchy" men of the time of Cromwell. These whining pietists had a penchant for going back into the misty past—often in egotistical literalists a sure mark of unlimited ignorance—and dealing in large numbers with defunct kingdoms. They had read also in ancient history of the four kingdoms of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome; and they said that Christ was coming right soon to found a "fifth monarchy," over which they alone would rule, *à la* Russell's "little flock." They said that Daniel vii. 27 was their warrant for being the "deputies" of Christ. Some of them even aimed at the subversion of all earthly government, arguing that it was only a short time, anyhow, until the fifth monarchy would be set up. Well, if any of them had been compelled to wait for their prophecy,

which was also "imminent," Methuselah would be a baby compared with them.

By the same peculiar oversight they missed the Millerites, who might have proved "star witnesses" to show that the belief in the immediate coming, which was "imminent" again, was prevalent in 1843 right here in the United States of America. The Millerites believed so strongly in the "imminent" coming that when the set day approached they put on "ascension robes," climbed up into trees, sat on the high hills and the roofs of barns, and raptly awaited the "rapture" which was promised. Early on that day little children, young men and maidens, old women, and men with patriarchal whiskers, all arrayed in "ascension robes," sought the highest places they could find, possibly with the idea of making it easier for the Lord to lift them or to get a "head start" to arrive first. That day found whole families perched on the roof of the home barn and not an "ascension robe" lacking.

High noon on a certain day was the hour fixed by the incurable programmers, when the trusting farmers and their families would exchange "ascension robes" for harps. But as they were on the "heights" before breakfast, they evidently thought that carnal food would destroy their appetite for angels' food. High noon came, then one, two, and three o'clock, and nothing happened to them except an intensely growing appetite; even their rapt excitement could not keep that down. Then sunset came, and with the setting of the sun was the setting of all their hopes. In the darkness they climbed down from the hills, the trees, and the barn roofs at imminent dead-

ly peril to their ascension robes and their necks; and many went home broken in faith, never to trust God or man again. It is a fact of history that many were so disappointed and excited that they became raving maniacs. To hundreds of others it was the deepest kind of a tragedy, the shipwreck of simple, trusting faith. It meant that honest, trusting, unlearned men and women had been trifled with by a brace of fanatics and that the holiest emotion of which the human heart is capable, a trust in the things of God, was wrecked forever.

Let me ask a question of the present-day programmers: "Suppose you are led into the folly of your spiritual fathers, the fifth-monarchy men, Miller and the rest, and you set a day for the Lord's return, and the Lord pays no attention to your program, as in the past. What then?" You might pause from treating the books of Daniel and Revelation as a celestial almanac long enough to answer that. It is worth while thinking about.

But a little thing like being mistaken in their "inspired" prophecies does not trouble the "prophets." The Millerite leaders of 1843 "came back" in 1844 with a new set of prophecies. They made the trifling mistake of only a year, and this time they had some "sure-fire" prophecy. A trifling mistake in figures of only a year when they were accustomed to dealing with thousands of years was a mere bagatelle. Here were some new "figures"; the time was 1844, sure.

But this time they rather put the soft pedal on the spectacular features. The "ascension robes" were not quite so long and the hills and trees climbed not

so high. Another failure. Then the Seventh-Day Adventists gradually acquired all right, title, and privileges to their exploded notions, and the Sabbatarians enjoyed quite a monopoly of the business until "Pastor" Russell entered his claim.

No; the various high and sundry names of those who all made the same mistake in predicting the time of the Lord's return impresses me with nothing except this: The Lord is not going to take his program from any mortal or any aggregation of mortals, and "time-tables" are of no value in eschatology. Further, it enforces wonderfully well that simple, yet luminous statement of the Master when he said: "Of that hour no man knoweth." To my mind, "figuring" on the "days" and the "times and a half time" of Daniel means nothing but a waste of valuable time and expensive paper and ink. I am not impressed with their figures; I have seen too many of them. In the first place, they have never established an infallible *terminus a quo* for the days of Daniel, and they have never established a standard for determining the time or length of a "day." For instance, in Revelation xi. and xii. 6 and following there is a reference to twelve hundred and sixty days. This they interpret to mean twelve hundred and sixty years, on the supposed statement by St. Peter that a year is as a day. Well, if a day is as a year, it is also stated (on the same authority) that a year is as a day, and then the one thousand years of Revelation xx. means only a thousand days. But they are quite off here; for Peter says that a day with the Lord is as a thousand years, which means only that God does not look at things from the

standpoint of time, but of eternity. However, if you take the words in cold literalness, you have the unthinkable proof of one million two hundred and sixty thousand years as the period of the apocalyptic woman's stay in the wilderness, and the millennium must also include one million years! One of the "prophets" commenting on Revelation xi., where the twelve hundred and sixty days are mentioned also in regard to Jerusalem's desolation, figured in 1896 thus: "Jerusalem was captured by the Mohammedans in 637 A.D. One thousand eight hundred and ninety-seven minus six hundred and thirty-seven leaves twelve hundred and sixty. You see from this calculation that the Turks have but one year more in the Holy Land." There was nothing wrong with that statement except that it was a trifle premature.

I fear that the millennialists, many devout men and women among them, make the awful, though unconscious, mistake of minimizing the work of Christ in the world. Almost to a man they deny that the kingdom of God is now in the world. Every reference of the Scriptures concerning the kingdom they make to refer to the millennium. We saw this clearly in their horrible mutilation of the parable of the tares, and this same mutilation has happened in every other instance where the word "kingdom" is used. What is in the world to-day if the kingdom is not? They blandly tell us that the only thing the Gentiles have is the "mystery," or the Church. They quote Romans xvi. 25 to show that the Church was "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began." They say that there is no

kingdom of God in the world to-day and that there will not be any until the millennium.

Of course such a theory is necessary for their other schedules. But the truth lies in the statement that the kingdom of God is in the world to-day and that the kingdom of God lies in the future also. Take the Gospels. In Matthew v. occur the Beatitudes, which relate to our conduct here on earth. Who can read Matthew v. 3 and doubt even for a second that the kingdom was an actual possession of the poor in spirit, even as eternal life in the fourth Gospel is always regarded as a present possession? The same can be said of Matthew v. 10. Take the parables peculiar to Matthew where the word "kingdom" is used and see if they do not refer to earthly conditions. Take the parable of the sower, which represents the "word of the kingdom" as seed falling on four different kinds of human hearts. The tares represent the kingdom as a field in which good seed was first sown, and then the enemy sows bad seed, and both kinds of seed grow up until the "harvest," or the final judgment. This parable has conditions which begin in time and end in the fire of eternity. The mustard seed teaches the growth of the kingdom from the smallest beginnings. The leaven teaches the influence of the kingdom among men, spreading from one to another. The net represents a condition which plainly teaches that the "kingdom," represented by the "net," is at work in the world and comprehends the work of the "kingdom" here and hereafter. The unmerciful servant teaches that in Christ's kingdom here on earth we must forgive each other. Only the millennial king-

dom would deal with forgiveness, if we accept the Russellite heresy of "second probation," and even then forgiveness would not be a question between man and man, but between man and God only. This is an unanswerable argument for the kingdom here and now on earth. In the parable of the two sons Jesus told the chief priests that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom before you—"go," present tense. In the parable of the wicked husbandman, verse 43, we read: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This is exactly what happened when the Jews rejected Jesus and the Gentiles accepted him, else Paul, as we shall see later, would not have turned so firmly to the Gentiles. The marriage of the king's son also teaches the same great truth. The parable of the ten virgins is used by all millennialists to show the necessity for watching for our Lord. If such is the case, then they must logically place the kingdom before his coming. Read the very first verse of that parable: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." The parable of the ten talents represents the work we do in the kingdom of God here on earth as being the basis of all our rewards and punishments in the future. Matthew xvi. 18 certainly identifies the Church, the ecclesia, the called out of God, with the kingdom. In Mark i. 14, 15: "Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the

gospel." Compare this with Matthew iv. 17, 23. In Matthew the phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used; in Mark and Luke, "kingdom of God." When we read here that Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is at hand," we must believe that he meant it; also we must believe it because we know that repentance and belief in the gospel are now inseparably bound up with the condition of entrance into that kingdom here. Take the parables in Mark iv.—the sower, the grain of mustard seed, and the seed growing secretly. In the last named we get a sane view of the "kingdom of God": "First the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." (Mark iv. 28.) Luke iv. 43 represents Jesus as saying: "I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent." Luke vi. 20: "Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God." Notice the use of the present tense, "is." The kingdom is, here and now. Concerning John the Baptist (Luke vii. 28): "He that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Luke ix. 27: "There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God." To the man who said that he would follow Jesus everywhere Jesus said: "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke xvii. 20, 21, to the Pharisees who asked when the kingdom of God was coming (for the Jews believed that the kingdom would come to earth with the Messiah when he first came, even if the millennialists do not), Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation," and, "The kingdom of

God is within you." That is, in effect: The Messiah has come; his kingdom is spiritual and within the hearts of men; it is not a temporal kingdom, as you Pharisees suppose. This, in substance, is the reply of Jesus to the Pharisees, who asked their question because they knew that the Messiah, when he did come, would bring a "kingdom." The nature of the kingdom, however, they did not understand.

St. John's views on the kingdom are so distinctly spiritual that they are easily the despair of the millennialists. In John iii. 3 we have the word of Christ: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Also verse 5: "Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." A man's induction into the kingdom would be by the earthly means of water and by the reception into his heart and life of the Holy Spirit; this reception of the Holy Spirit into the heart, leading a man into all truth and giving him power, even as the disciples had on the day of Pentecost, is the key to the kingdom. But the Adventist sects among the millennialists and the Russellites pay but little attention to the office and work of the Holy Spirit; and though sent from above as the greatest blessing that man could receive from God, they ignore it. Russell in all his writings refers to the Holy Spirit only once, and that in no terms of special honor. To deny that the kingdom of God does exist on earth to-day is to insult the Holy Spirit and shamefully minimize his work. According to Acts i. 3, after the resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples for the space of forty days, "speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God." If you

want to know what these things were, read Matthew xxviii. 19, 20 especially. Here is the Great Commission to teach all nations. If after his resurrection Jesus ever spoke "concerning the kingdom of God," surely this was what he said, the charge to preach the gospel in the present world. Read Mark xvi. 15, 16, the Great Commission again. Read Luke xxiv. 47-49, again virtually the Great Commission. Read John xxi. and see the call to Peter to feed his sheep and his lambs. These references contain all the references to all the teaching Christ did after the resurrection, during those forty days, and they show what the writer of Acts, Luke, who also wrote the Gospel according to Luke, which gives an account of those forty days, believed "concerning the kingdom of God." It will throw a flood of light on the "kingdom" in that Gospel also.

According to Acts xxviii. 23, the testimony of Paul when he testified to the kingdom of God was to the fact of Jesus being the Messiah. If the Jews, to whom he was preaching and who believed, as all devout Jews did, that the kingdom was bound up in the coming of the Messiah, would only believe that Jesus was the Messiah, then Paul knew they would believe that the kingdom was already come. Preaching that Jesus was the Messiah was to every Jew equivalent to saying that Jesus had brought the kingdom. We have already seen in Luke xvii. 20, 21 that the Pharisees recognized the logic of this instantly and naturally.

We see here in Acts xxviii. 24-30 a fulfillment of the prophecy of Jesus when he told the Jews in the parable of the wicked husbandman (Matt. xxi. 43)

that the kingdom of God would be "taken away from them and given to another nation." When Paul turned away from the Jews at Rome (Acts xxviii.) he declared as fulfillment of this prophecy: "This salvation is sent to the Gentiles: they will also hear." Verses 30 and 31 recite that he spent two years in his own hired house, preaching the kingdom of God to all that came to him. But of what use is that argument to a hidebound Russellite, an Adventist, a dyed-in-the-wool millennialist? They arrogantly tell you not to pay any attention to such Scripture; and as for Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul, they were not members of the kingdom, for "the kingdom cannot exist before the millennium." What a pity these "prophets" were not living in the early days to put the evangelists and the apostles right!

I sometimes wonder if the millennialists are aware of their logic? I wonder whether they realize how Jewish they are? The Jew does not believe that the kingdom had ever come, because he does not believe that the Messiah has ever come. If you could thoroughly convince a Jew that the Messiah had come, he would naturally believe that the kingdom has come. If the millennialists who adopt some of the Jews' doctrine of the millennium would accept it all in order to be consistent, they would have to say that Jesus was not the Messiah. It is only their early religious rooting and grounding in the belief that Jesus is the Messiah that saves them from being shipwrecked in faith, due to the brain storms of their extreme Jewish literalism. Certainly many good, honest souls do not realize the grav-

ity of their offense. But how awfully inconsistent and illogical they are! And how dangerous is their position on the kingdom!

I cannot refrain (although the millennialists will not respect the view, yet other sincere souls who are studying this question will) from quoting that great teacher, St. Paul. Take his view in Romans xiv. 17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink [or eating and drinking], but righteousness and joy and peace in the Holy Spirit." Notice the office of the Holy Spirit as the inductor into the kingdom. Also compare Luke vi. 20 and Matthew iii. 2. On Romans xiv 17 Lange says: "The heavenly sphere of life in which God's word and Spirit govern and whose organ on earth is the Church." This is his view of the "kingdom of God." Also Marvin Vincent: "Not the future Messianic kingdom." (Vincent's "Word Studies," volume on "Romans.") Speaking of his preaching and his teaching as compared with some others, Paul said: "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Now, have we not abundantly shown that the true teaching of the Scriptures concerning the kingdom is that it is now on earth as well as in the future?

What was the Jewish theocracy? Did it not teach in a remarkable way the idea of the kingdom on earth? According to the millennialists themselves, the kingdom spoken of in Daniel ii. 44, which the God of heaven was to set up in the earth, refers to a kingdom which was to be set up during the life of the Roman Empire? Was this not Christ's kingdom? Vincent says: "The idea of the kingdom ad-

vanced toward clearer definition from Jacob's prophecy of the prince out of Judah (Gen. xlix. 10), through David's prophecy of the everlasting kingdom and the kingdom of righteousness and peace (Ps. xxii., cxxii.), through Isaiah, until in Daniel its eternity and superiority over the kingdoms of the world are strongly brought out." Tholuck says: "As the Old Testament kingdom of God was perfected and completed when it ceased to be external and became internal by being enthroned in the heart, so, on the other hand, the perfection of the New Testament kingdom will consist in its complete incarnation and externalization—that is, when it shall attain an outward manifestation adequately expressing, exactly corresponding to its internal principle."

In other words, not the Church merely as an organization, but faithful men and women while here on the earth, who listen to the voice of God and conform their life to his calling them out of the world, who express in their outward lives the true life of God in their souls—these are they who make up the kingdom; and they will all—yes, even we Gentiles who obey Christ—also be members of that heavenly kingdom described in the last chapters of the book of Revelation.

This word in conclusion to all who are troubled on this question. If the millennialists are as poor prophets as they are exegetes, and I think they are, you may well take the words of St. Paul to heart: "Be not troubled in your minds." We have shown that all their star prophets and some we have not quoted, as Mrs. White, of the Seventh-Day Advent-

ists, "Pastor" Russell, and various lesser lights, have all been "the lights that failed."

For myself, I am persuaded in my own heart that nothing would give me greater joy than to behold my Lord coming to earth to bless it. I can readily understand that when we look upon the carnage which is in the world to-day and see the frightful condition of mankind we might fervently wish for the Lord to come, even as the second-century Jew wished for his millennium. I am not unsympathetic; but I am convinced that the preaching of the "time-table prophets" is absolutely unscriptural, Jewish to the core, hostile to the real character of Christ as a Redeemer, destroys the effect of his atonement, and kills his kingdom. Besides this, it ignores absolutely the divine Holy Spirit and his office and work. I believe that if we who profess the name of Christ will reconsecrate the whole of our ransomed powers to him and preach his word with the Holy Spirit sent down from above, we shall redeem this world from its welter of blood and that we shall sweep through the darkness of war and sin into a brighter day. I am afraid for the making of schedules for the Lord, knowing that he has not revealed certain things to any man. I am afraid of the reaction of disappointment, and I am unalterably opposed to preaching that which has driven people insane in the past and has been nothing but a gospel of terror in the hands of most of them. I want the kingdom built up with people who love the Lord with their whole hearts rather than merely from their disturbed minds. If we but go forward to preach the gospel of the kingdom as the disciples

preached it at Pentecost and after Pentecost, we shall have the success of the disciples, and soon the world will be as that hard Roman world was—answerable to the cross. The hour calls for consecration. God help us to be sane and faithful! We are not to whine at hard conditions; we are to change them. Our Master overcame the world, and we can do it in his name.

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